



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Flexible hours work best for engaging in WA workforce

The most desirable working arrangements for people wanting to engage in the workforce in Western Australia is being able to choose the hours they worked, according to a report released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This was the case for Western Australians who weren't in the labour force as well as those working for an employer. For those not in the labour force, part-time work and/or flexible working hours were required to engage them in the labour force. The most common changes to working arrangements requested by employees, were for changes to hours and/or flexible working hours.

Western Australians not in the labour force

- This group was predominantly female (76%).
- More than one in three (36%) were aged 55 years and over.
- One in three (30%) were living in households with a child aged 0-4 years.
- Having children was the most frequently reported reason for females leaving their previous job (35%) while for males it was having a long term health condition or disability (32%).
- Two in five (41%) people reported that they would like to return to, or start, work. The proportion was higher for those with 0-4 year old children in the household (59%).
- In order to return to, or start, work, three in five (58%) required part-time work and two in five (39%) needed flexible start and finish times.

Western Australian Employees

The majority of employees reported that their work and family/social responsibilities were sometimes balanced (49%) or always balanced (40%).

- One in four people (23%) requested changes to work arrangements in the past 12 months and nearly four in five (78%) of these requests were approved.
- The proportion who requested changes was highest amongst those that felt their work life was rarely or never balanced (35%) and lowest for those whose work and life was always balanced (19%).
- One in three (34%) people in households with 0-4 year old children requested changes to work arrangements; higher than for households with no children under 15 years (20%).
- One in five full-time employees (23%) wanted to reduce their working hours but more than half (56%) could not afford the accompanying drop in pay. For more than half (52%) the main reason for wanting fewer hours was social or recreational while 19% reported family reasons.

More details are available in *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, Western Australia* (cat no. 6210.5).

Media notes:

- In this context, Western Australians not in the labour force excludes those on long term unpaid leave; and employees includes those on long term unpaid leave.
- When reporting ABS data the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.

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